

Message Text

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FROM OPERATIONS CENTER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:PINS, US

SUBJECT: NYT STORY ON ERW

REF: PAO REED USNATO- MARTIN OPS CENTER TELECON

1. FOLLOWING IS RICHARD BURT'S STORY WHICH APPEARED APRIL
4, IN NEW YORK TIMES.

2. BEGIN TEXT: ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS SAID TODAY THAT
PRESIDENT CARTER HAD DECIDED AGAINST PRODUCING THE CONTRO-
VERSIAL NEUTRON BOMB.

THE OFFICIALS SAID THAT MR. CARTER HAD ACTED AGAINST THE
ADVICE OF MOST OF HIS TOP FOREIGN POLICY ADVISERS IN DECID-
ING RECENTLY THAT MOVING AHEAD WITH THE WEAPON RAN COUNTER
TO HIS GOALS OF NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT.

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THE DECISION, OFFICIALS SAID, WAS MADE JUST BEFORE MR.
CARTER'S DEPARTURE LAST WEEK FOR LATIN AMERICA AND AFRICA
AND A FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT IS EXPECTED LATER THIS WEEK.
IN THE ANNOUNCEMENT, MR. CARTER IS EXPECTED TO SAY THAT THE
UNITED STATES WILL NOT PRODUCE THE WEAPON, WHICH IS
DESIGNED TO KILL PEOPLE WITH RADIATION AND CAUSE RELATIVELY
LITTLE DAMAGE TO PROPERTY IN ADJACENT AREAS, AND THAT HE

EXPECTS THE SOVIET UNION TO SHOW SIMILAR RESTRAINT IN THE DEPLOYMENT OF NEW NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

HOWEVER, SOME TOP ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS ARE SAID TO BE HOPING THAT MR. CARTER MIGHT BE PERSUADED THIS WEEK TO DELAY OUTRIGHT CANCELLATION OF THE WEAPON AND SIMPLY ANNOUNCE A DECISION TO DEFER PRODUCTION INDEFINITELY. IN THIS WAY, THEY SAID, MR. CARTER COULD LEAVE OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF DEPLOYING THE NEUTRON WEAPON AT A LATER DATE.

BUT THE OFFICIALS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE WAS ONLY A SLIM POSSIBILITY THAT MR. CARTER WOULD GO BACK ON HIS DECISION TO HALT THE PROGRAM.

THE DECISION APPEARS LIKELY TO DRAW HEAVY CRITICISM FROM CONGRESSIONAL OPPONENTS OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S DEFENSE POLICIES, WHO LAST SUMMER STRONGLY ATTACKED THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO CANCEL THE B-1 BOMBER.

SOME OFFICIALS ALSO PREDICT THAT THE NEUTRON BOMB DECISION COULD CAUSE PROBLEMS IN WESTERN EUROPE, WHERE THE ISSUE HAS BECOME ONE OF THE MOST SENSITIVE IN WESTERN ALLIANCE RELATIONS IN YEARS.

ALTHOUGH THE WEAPON HAS BEEN STRONGLY SUPPORTED BY DEFENSE OFFICIALS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC, CRITICS HAVE

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ARGUED FOR MORE THAN A YEAR THAT ITS DEPLOYMENT WOULD MAKE A NUCLEAR WAR IN EUROPE MORE LIKELY.

THE SOVIET UNION HAS ALSO STRONGLY OPPOSED THE WEAPON, ARGUING THAT IT UNDERMINED MR. CARTER'S STAND AS A SUPPORTER OF NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL.

IN VIEW OF THIS CRITICISM, NEITHER THE UNITED STATES NOR ITS EUROPEAN ALLIES WERE WILLING TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD APPROVING THE WEAPON, WHICH HAS BEEN DESIGNED FOR USE ON SHORT-RANGE MISSILES AND ARTILLERY FOR USE MAINLY IN THE EVENT OF AN ATTACK BY SOVIET ARMOR IN WESTERN EUROPE.

MR. CARTER SAID LAST YEAR THAT HE WOULD NOT AGREE TO PRODUCTION OF THE WEAPON UNTIL EUROPEAN LEADERS AGREED THAT IT COULD BE DEPLOYED. THESE LEADERS, HOWEVER, FACING CRITICISM AT HOME, INSISTED THAT MR. CARTER FIRST ANNOUNCE A DECISION TO BEGIN PRODUCTION.

TO RESOLVE THIS STALEMATE, NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE OFFICIALS IN BRUSSELS PUT TOGETHER A COMPROMISE, WHICH WAS

TO HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED ON MARCH 20, THAT WOULD HAVE ENABLED THE UNITED STATES TO BEGIN PRODUCING THE WEAPON LATER THIS YEAR BUT WOULD HAVE DELAYED DEPLOYMENT FOR TWO YEARS WHILE TESTING MOSCOW'S REACTION TO LIMITING IT IN RETURN FOR RESTRICTIONS ON THE NEW SOVIET SS-20 MISSILE.

MR. CARTER'S TOP FOREIGN POLICY AIDES, INCLUDING ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI, THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER, SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE AND SECRETARY OF DEFENSE HAROLD BROWN, ARE SAID TO HAVE STRONGLY SUPPORTED THIS IDEA. OFFICIALS SAID THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT WITHIN THIS GROUP THAT A FAILURE TO GO AHEAD WITH THE WEAPON WOULD CAST DOUBT ON AMERICAN LEADERSHIP WITHIN NATO AND WOULD ALSO BE SEEN AS GIVING IN TO SOVIET EFFORTS AT PREVENTING

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DEPLOYMENT.

OFFICIALS SAID THAT TWO WEEKS AGO MR. CARTER SCRAPPED THIS PLAN AND DECIDED INSTEAD TO FORGO DEPLOYMENT OF THE WEAPON ALTOGETHER. OFFICIALS WERE UNABLE TO PROVIDE AN EXACT EXPLANATION FOR THE DECISION, BUT ONE SAID THAT MR. CARTER FELT THAT MOVING AHEAD WITH THE WEAPON WOULD VIOLATE "SOME DEEPLY HELD CONVICTION".

OTHER OFFICIALS INDICATED THAT MR. CARTER'S DECISION WAS ALSO BASED ON DOUBTS ABOUT WHETHER ALLIED GOVERNMENTS WERE PREPARED TO ALLOW THE BOMB'S DEPLOYMENT IF ARMS-CONTROL TALKS WITH MOSCOW ON THE SUBJECT FAILED. THEY SAID MR. CARTER WAS SUPPORTED IN THESE VIEWS BY POLITICAL ADVISERS IN THE WHITE HOUSE AND BY ANDREW YOUNG, THE UNITED NATIONS REPRESENTATIVE AT THE UNITED NATIONS.

AS A RESULT, OFFICIALS SAID, THE ADMINISTRATION HAS BEGUN TO INFORM ALLIED GOVERNMENTS PRIVATELY OF ITS DECISION. THEY SAID THAT WARREN M. CHRISTOPHER, THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE, SAW CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT OF WEST GERMANY LAST WEEK AND TOLD HIM OF MR. CARTER'S DECISION. THE WEST GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER, HANS-DIETRICH GENSCHER, IS DUE HERE TOMORROW FOR TALKS WITH SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS R. VANCE AND THE NEUTRON BOMB DECISION IS EXPECTED TO BE AMONG THE SUBJECTS DISCUSSED.

ALTHOUGH MR. SCHMIDT IS SAID TO HAVE ACCEPTED MR. CARTER'S DECISION, IT IS EXPECTED TO AROUSE INTENSE CONTROVERSY IN WEST GERMANY. ACCORDINGLY, SOME OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT MR. GENSCHER, IN HIS TALKS WITH MR. VANCE TOMORROW, MAY ASK THAT THE DECISION BE MODIFIED, TO LEAVE OPEN THE CHANCE OF PRODUCTION AT A LATER DATE.

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IF THIS OCCURS, THE OFFICIALS SAID THAT THIS MIGHT STR-
ENGTHEN THE CASE OF MR. BRZEZINSKI, MR. BROWN AND
OTHERS WHO ARE ASKING THAT MR. CARTER NOT FORECLOSE THE
POSSIBILITY OF NEUTRON BOMB PRODUCTION ALTOGETHER. BUT
THEY ASSESSED THE CHANCES OF THIS HAPPENING AS LOW. VANCE

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